

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-12 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01
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R 262315Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6798
INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMCONSUL BELIZE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USCINCSO
DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS SAN SALVADOR 0415

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MASS SHUM PEPR UK ES
SUBJ: GOES REACTION TO BRITISH CANCELLATION OF SALES OF ARMORED
VEHICLES

REF: (A) STATE 19578, (B) LONDON 1119

SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER MARTINEZ STATED TO THE PRESS THAT
IF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT CHOSE NOT TO GO THROUGH WITH THE
SALE OF ARMORED VEHICLES, THE GOES WOULD SEEK DAMAGES. HE
ALSO SAID THAT THE VEHICLES WERE TO HAVE BEEN USED FOR TRAINING
PURPOSES ONLY. END SUMMARY.

1. IN STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS, FOREIGN MINISTER ALVARO
MARTINEZ SAID ON JANUARY 20 THAT IF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT
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CHOSE NOT TO GO THROUGH WITH THE SALE OF ARMS ALREADY
CONTRACTED FOR, IT QTE WOULD HAVE TO PAY A BIG INDEMNITY
TO THE GOVERNMENT OF EL SALVADOR FOR DAMAGES AND OTHER COSTS
SET FORTH IN THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONTRACT UNQTE.

2. WITH RESPECT TO THE CONCERN EXPRESSED THAT THE
ARMORED VEHICLES MIGHT BE USED TO HELP SUPPORT

GUATEMALA'S CLAIM TO BELIZE, MARTINEZ FURTHER COMMENTED TO THE PRESS QTE THAT IT IS LOGICAL THAT WHEN A COUNTRY IS BUYING ARMAMENTS TO MAKE WAR, IT WILL NOT CONTRACT FOR MCTITARY SURPLUS,SNUT WILL SEEK TO BUY THE MOST ADVANCED MILITARY HARDWARE UNQTE. HE ADDED THAT THE ARMORED CARS OF WORLD WAR II VINTAGE WERE RECONDITIONED VEHICLES THAT WERE TO HAVE BEEN UTILIZED BY THE GOES ONLY FOR INSTRUCTION PURPOSES. HE CLAIMED THAT THE GOES ORIGINALLY HAD NOT SOUGHT TO BUY THE EQUIPMENT (ACCORDING TO PRESS, VALUED AT U.S. \$1.6 MILLION), BUT RATHER HAD RESPONDED TO A BRITISH OFFER.

3. MARTINEZ APPARENTLY DID NOT MAKE REFERENCE TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS BEHIND THE BRITISH CANCELLATION. HOWEVER, PAST PRESS ACCOUNTS (SUCH AS THE DECEMBER 3, 1977 EDITION OF "EL DIARIO DE HOY") HAVE MADE REFERENCE TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY CERTAIN BRITISH GROUPS OVER THE SALE. THE JANUARY 16, 1978 EDITION OF THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT "LA CRONICA" STATED THAT THERE HAD BEEN A QTE SERIOUS WARNING UNQTE GIVEN BY BRITISH FOREIGN MINISTER DAVID OWEN TO THE GOES THAT THE MATERIAL TO BE SOLD TO EL SALVADOR QTE MUST NOT BE USED FOR INTERNAL REPRESSION UNQTE.

4. DATT CHECKING WITH MILITARY. ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WILL BE REPORTED SEPTTEL.
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